

A STUDY OF STANDARD TRUMPET REPERTOIRE THROUGH RECITAL PREPARATION AND PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Undergoing the process of preparing a Senior Recital is a requirement of all music students at East Carolina University. The performance serves as an opportunity to showcase the musical studies that the student has diligently completed through lessons, practice, research, and performance throughout their college career. I utilized this opportunity to go beyond the basic requirements of a Senior Recital by incorporating a research and lecture component focused on the pieces of the recital. The selections studied in this project consist of *Concerto a Tromba principale* by Johann Nepomuk Hummel, *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* by Kent Kennan, *Légende* by Georges Enesco, and *Brèves Rencontres* by Jacques Castérède. These pieces were selected based on several factors: difficulty, historical context, and contrast within the repertoire are among the greatest factors. The written component of this project discusses the background and context of each piece while providing the reader with information unique to each piece. Most, if not all, of the information researched is to be shared in a lecture format as an additional component to my Senior Recital. Each component of this project has bettered my own understanding of standard trumpet repertoire as well as the process of performance preparation.

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Introduction

Musicians dedicate their lives to honing the art of performing. A performance serves as the culmination of countless hours of dedicated practice, instruction, and study, providing the musician the opportunity to showcase their talent in a single event. The purpose of this project is to explore some of the staples of the trumpet repertoire through performance. This particular recital will be of full recital length (1 hour) and incorporate a lecture on the background and unique issues of the repertoire. The following information will provide a background and context of each piece to be performed including particular information unique to each work of standard trumpet repertoire, from which the lecture will be derived.

***Concerto a Tromba principale* – Johann Nepomuk Hummel**

Johann Nepomuk Hummel was born in Pressburg, Austria in 1778— a child prodigy of a musical family. Hummel excelled in piano, eventually becoming a pupil of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Following an extensive performing tour with his father, Hummel spent much of his time composing. Influenced by other composers of the time such as Salieri, Albrechtsberger, Haydn, and Beethoven, Hummel wrote numerous pieces in a variety of settings. Following his death in 1837 due to illness, Hummel's effect on the music of the era still remained present.¹

Hummel's *Concerto a Tromba principale*, or *Concerto for Trumpet*, is a staple of the trumpet repertoire. The work was completed in December of 1803 to be performed by Anton Weidinger, the Viennese keyed trumpet virtuoso. Within a month of its completion, the concerto was performed on January 1, 1804. Hummel's concerto was one of two major pieces written for

¹ Joel Sachs and Mark Kroll, "Hummel, Johann Nepomuk," *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/13548?q=johann+nepomuk+hummel&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit (accessed November 12, 2015).

the keyed trumpet, the earlier being a concerto for trumpet composed by Franz Joseph Haydn in 1796.²

This concerto consists of three movements of contrasting nature. The first, referred to as *Allegro*, features the instrument's flexibility in its alternating melodic and technical passages. The second movement, *Andante*, is introduced in concert Ab minor and incorporates long, legato gestures that unfold into a satisfying resolution in concert Ab major. A slight attacca leading into the third movement, *Rondeau*, offers a contrasting mood and a sense of motion. Composed as a traditional rondo, the final movement of the concerto opens with a theme similar to that of "bugle calls" that returns throughout the movement. Featuring the performer's tonguing and technical abilities, this movement serves to conclude the concerto on an exciting note.

Despite the seemingly simplistic context of the piece, there are several issues that surround its modern interpretations. The concerto is commonly referred to as being in E-flat major; however, this indication does not hold true to the original composition of E major. Justification for the modern interpretation of the piece in E-flat comes in many forms: the pitch was thought to have sounded lower during 19th century Vienna and the lack of trumpets keyed in E until recently are among those justifications. This particular performance will be performed in E-flat due to the availability of an E-flat trumpet. Overall, this piece serves as an excellent recital opener that allows for a smooth transition to the Sonata for Trumpet and Piano by Kent Kennan.

Sonata for Trumpet and Piano – Kent Kennan

American composer Kent Kennan (1913-2003) was born in Milwaukee, WI and began his musical experience on piano. His initial studies were completed at the University of

² William H. Tarr, Foreword to J.N. Hummel, *Concerto a Tromba principale*, C.H. Sherman, et al, eds (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1972).

Michigan before attending the Eastman School for composition. Following several successes as a composer, Kennan began to teach at Kent State University in 1939. Kennan ultimately took the position of professor of composition at the University of Texas, a university at which he had previously taught.³

Kennan's *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* was composed in 1956 as a commission for the National Association of Schools of Music. A push for more wind literature of major instruments sparked the composition of several sonatas for trumpet.⁴ Like other sonatas of the time—such as those by Tuthill, Antheil, and Halsey Stevens—Kennan's trumpet sonata features characteristics that are to be expected of 1950s compositions. These sonatas can be considered neo-classical in their harmonic structure, featuring “highly disjunct melodies, non-traditional tonality structures, and a heavy emphasis on rhythm and metric accents.”⁵

This piece was revised in 1986, offering a slightly different perspective to the work. One of the major changes is the alteration of tempo markings. Due to a faulty metronome during its composition, the tempos were deemed as too fast for the context and thus, the revision is slightly slower. Groups of rhythms are presented in a more user-friendly format in the revised version with the usage of mixed meters as opposed to common time⁶. Speaking on the melodic content of the piece, not much changed from the revision. Slight changes in the first movement—including the removal of an extended coda and slight rhythmic changes—are of the greatest

³ W. Thomas Marrocco, "Kennan, Kent," *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/13548?q=johann+nepomuk+hummel&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit (accessed November 13, 2015).

⁴ Jennifer Lorien Dearden, “The American Trumpet Sonata in the 1950s: An Analytical and Sociohistorical Discussion of Trumpet Sonatas by George Antheil, Kent Kennan, Halsey Stevens, and Burnet Tuthill,” diss. (University of North Texas, 2007), p. 4.

⁵ Dearden, “American Trumpet Sonata”, 11.

⁶ Anne Kovarik McNamara, “A Century of American Solo Trumpet Music,” diss. (University of Maryland, 2014), p. 15.

differences.⁷ The revised version remains a more popular option to today's performers due to its availability, and it serves as an excellent addition to a trumpet recital.

***Légende* – Georges Enesco**

Growing up as an only child, Romanian composer Georges Enesco (1881-1955) spent much of his childhood devoted to music.⁸ He began studying violin at a young age, eventually attending the Vienna Musical Academy. While in Vienna, Enesco studied violin under the instruction of Joseph Hellmesberger, Jr. The Academy exposed Enesco to many great composers—such as Beethoven and Brahms—whom he began to admire with deep fascination.⁹ However, his greatest influence is said to have been French composer César Franck, whose composition style is modeled in Enesco's use of monothematic composition.¹⁰

The circumstances behind Enesco's piece for solo trumpet and piano, *Légende*, are unique to this program. Following his graduation from the Paris Conservatory in 1899, Enesco was tasked with composing a piece for a competition there in 1906. Enesco chose to dedicate the piece to trumpet professor Merri Franquin (1848-1934), a promoter of the small-bore C/D trumpet. As a result, *Légende* was composed for the C trumpet.¹¹

This virtuosic work varies the recital greatly in its virtuosic composition. A slow introduction unfolds into a harmonically rich and captivating faster section. Many challenges are presented to the performer in the form of extreme range, long phrases, and multiple-tonguing sections. Enesco's background as a violinist, an extremely versatile instrument, lends to the

⁷ Kent Kennan, Introductory Note to *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* (New York: Alfred Publication Company, Inc., 1986).

⁸ B. Kotlyarov, *Enesco His Life and Times* (Neptune City: Paganiniana Publications, Inc.) p. 15.

⁹ Kotlyarov, *Enesco*, 18.

¹⁰ Kotlyarov, *Enesco*, 11.

¹¹ Frederick A. Sienkiewicz, "Research in Performance: Analysis of Five Trumpet Works," capstone manuscript (University of Massachusetts, 2005), p. 31.

difficult and exaggerated gestures throughout *Légende*. The work provides drama and excitement to a trumpet recital, and its purpose is often well-received by audiences.

***Brèves Rencontres* - Jacques Castérède**

The final selection of this recital is titled *Brèves Rencontres* composed by French composer Jacques Castérède (1926-2014). Not much has been written about this Paris native, however Castérède has had an accomplished career in musical composition. At the age of eighteen, he attended the prestigious Paris Conservatory studying under Olivier Messiaen.¹² In 1953, having already received multiple accolades for his compositions, Castérède was awarded the Prix de Rome, a distinguished award presented by the French government. Castérède remained a prolific composer until his death in 2014, composing for solos and ensembles of all instrumentations. Despite being a European composer, Castérède's work is highly recognized in both the United States and Canada.¹³

This recital features one of Castérède's few brass works. Not much has been written about *Brèves Rencontres*, unlike his *Sonatine* and *Concertino for Trumpet and Trombone*. The title translates to *Brief Meetings*—the title was chosen due to the time restriction of the piece imposed by the Paris Conservatory. The titles of the movements, *Divertissement*, *Pavane*, and *Scherzo* reflect the original intended usage of the terms from 17th century compositions—these connections can be heard within the music.¹⁴

While all of the music of the recital presents unique challenges, *Brèves Rencontres* introduces a wide array of issues that the performer must overcome. The exchanges between the trumpet and piano are “highly contrapuntal” and often use “canonic imitation, fragmentation, and

¹² Etienne Denis Stoupy, “A Performance Guide to the Trumpet Repertoire of Jacques Castérède focusing on Breves Rencontres and Concertino for Trumpet and Trombone,” diss. (University of North Texas, 2011), p. 1.

¹³ Jacques Castérède, Introductory Note to *Brèves Rencontres* (Montrouge: Editions Musicales Alphonse Leduc, 1965).

¹⁴ Stoupy, “A Performance Guide”, 3.

diminution.¹⁵” These compositional techniques are characteristic of Castérède’s writing style, but make the performance technically difficult in terms of rhythm, articulation, and endurance. The harmonic rhythm of the piece is quite fast, further creating additional difficulties that require careful coordination and practice. Range, phrasing, and articulation are frequently presented in challenging forms in each of the movements, allowing this piece to be a rewarding conclusion to a trumpet recital.

Conclusion

There are many benefits to undertaking the preparation of a recital. An understanding of the composer’s musical and historical intentions, an appreciation for the beauty imbedded in each work, and a discovery of one’s own musical limitations are each significant parts of the process. Each piece studied throughout this project is characterized by differing styles and purposes, but collectively create an excellent repertoire for a recital. Despite the difficulty of the recital, the practice, research, and study have ultimately prepared me for greater musical endeavors while allowing me the opportunity to share with others the culmination of the process.

¹⁵ Stoupy, “A Performance Guide”, 1.

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